

# Introduction

Margaret Sheil

I can think of no more fitting person to feature on the cover of this issue of *University of Melbourne Collections* than the exceptional Sir Redmond Barry. Not only was Barry a founder of the university and our first (and astonishingly energetic) chancellor, he was also instrumental in establishing other collecting, cultural and scientific institutions that continue to set Melbourne apart as a city of learning, research and the arts. Barry had a hand in forming what we now know as the State Library of Victoria, Museum Victoria, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Melbourne Athanaeum, the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society and the Royal Society. The example he set, in opening up his private library

to the residents of Melbourne in the days before there was a public library, is an inspiring one. This year is the bicentenary of Barry's birth, and Jason Benjamin's article demonstrates how fortunate the University of Melbourne is in holding, among its cultural collections, many items commemorating this important figure of early Victoria.

We celebrated another significant anniversary in 2013: 125 years of women studying medicine at the University of Melbourne. Although many of these medical pioneers are not as well known to us as Barry, they too made essential contributions to the development of our city, state and nation. Medical History Museum curator Dr Jacqueline Healy and a

number of today's eminent women medical practitioners draw attention to the achievements of a small sample of these women over the past century and a quarter.

Another colleague who pays tribute to a predecessor is the University of Melbourne librarian, Philip Kent, who discusses the life and work of our first librarian, Edward Hippius Bromby, while Dr Alison Inglis salutes the contribution of Dr Ray Marginson AM in ensuring the preservation of the remarkable collections assembled by anthropologist Professor Donald Thomson.

I am sure you will also enjoy reading about a beautiful kiwi feather cloak and how it was made; the conservation treatment of some English engravings and the copper plates used to produce them; literary collections held in the University of Melbourne Archives; and the influence of Mormon missionaries on our basketball teams in the 1950s.

**Professor Margaret Sheil** is provost of the University of Melbourne. From 2007 to 2012 she was the chief executive officer of the Australian Research Council. Before this she was deputy vice-chancellor (research), dean of science and a professor of chemistry at the University of Wollongong, and held research positions at the Australian National University and the University of Utah.

